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ABSTRACT

Many educators concerned with the quality and quantity of arts education believe that collaboration among the disciplines is necessary to improve conditions. Current probable visions for the future of visual art education are cloudy because of ambiguity surrounding the concept of collaboration. In order to explore this concept, this paper is written with three purposes in mind in an attempt to move from testimonial policies to the kind of operational policy for art education that is needed to advance the profession. The three purposes are: (1) to review the literature concerning the value of collaboration; (2) to analyze the concept from the perspectives of leadership and management theories, and cognitive psychology; and (3) to address the development of discipline based art education within the context of a discipline-specific strategy for change. The paper uses two state level examples of art education advocacy (plans of Iowa and Pennsylvania) to show how the theoretical use of collaboration has resulted in questionable policies and plans, and goes on to discuss the convenient "umbrella" concept of arts education, criticizing it for creating a false image of interdependence among the art forms and their disciplinary structure in education as well as a false image of coordination among the four major curricular areas in art. A case is made for the creation of a "National Institute for Education in the Visual Arts" which would provide the following services to the field: (1) conduct research and development activities; (2) publish and disseminate reports of its findings and those of related organizations and individuals; (3) serve as an information center; and (4) serve as a conference center. Above all, it would serve to connect all the different sectors of influence that impact on the arts: the federal sector, the regulatory and curricular sector, the professional associations sector, the advocacy sector, and all the many elements that make up the art world itself. (KM)

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THE RATIONAL PURSUIT OF COLLABORATION: WHERE DOES IT LEAD?

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February, 1990

THE RATIONAL PURSUIT OF COLLABORATION: WHERE DOES IT LEAD?

As I think about various futures for art education from kindergarten through higher education and teacher inservice, I wonder how the profession of teaching art is presently being shaped by the advocacy movement for more and different arts education. I wonder if the policies and programs currently directed at arts education will help or hinder the evolution of art education. My thoughts are especially piqued by the debate and dialogue concerning discipline-based art education (DBAE).

Many contemporary writers concerned with the quality and quantity of arts education in the United States have expressed the view that collaboration among the various agents for education in the four major art forms of dance, music, theater and the visual arts is necessary to improve conditions, expand resources, and impact the status of all. The consistent calls for collaboration have been based upon the belief that significant changes in public education on behalf of dance, music, theater and the visual arts are more likely to occur through the exercise of the political muscle of the arts establishment. In our democratic form of government, successful advocacy in the public domain seems to depend upon broad base support. Thus a great chorus of voices have chanted the merits of collaboration as a means to change the status quo of dance, music, theater and visual arts education in most elementary, secondary and post-secondary schools. Collaboration among the disciplines and the sectors of influence has been the prescribed tool for addressing needs and establishing goals.(1)

In this paper I will pursue the concept of collaboration with three purposes in mind. First, I will review the literature which has developed and reinforced ideas about the value of collaboration for initiating and implementing change. In particular, I will describe two state-level efforts which have resulted from the advocacy movement for arts education. Second, I will analyze the concept of collaboration from the perspectives of leadership and management theories, and cognitive psychology. Thirdly, I will address the development of discipline-based art education within the context of a discipline-specific strategy for change. Specifically, I will describe and explain a proposal to establish a National Institute for Education in the Visual Arts.

My motive in addressing the issue of collaboration is simple. I believe the current probable visions for the future of art education are cloudy because of ambiguity surrounding the concept of collaboration. I hope to effect this condition of ambiguity by moving from testimonial policies for arts education to an operational policy for art education, which I firmly believe is needed to advance the profession.(2)

Calls for Collaboration

Like the art of collage, collaboration involves the unification of different elements (individuals and organizations) for a selected purpose. In the case of public education and the art forms of dance, music, theater and the visual arts, the theme of collaboration has been promoted as a tool of change for many years by many advocates. I will briefly review several of the major calls for working together to approach a new sensibility in public education concerning the arts.

Beginning with Coming to Our Senses, which was published in 1977 by the American Council for the Arts in Education, several of the many recommendations in the report identified collaboration as a means to achieve significant goals for the arts. For example, the report called for the creation of a federal agency to be named the "National Center for the Arts in Education". The Center was recommended to encompass a research and development program entitled, "National Institute for the Study of Arts, Aesthetics and Education".(3) These were ambitious goals to recommend to the arts community at a time when existing education programs were in peril.(4) In total, the report made fifteen major recommendations which were further delineated into ninety-seven specific tasks. The theme of collaboration was very dominant in Coming to Our Senses.

In addition, the theme of collaboration was intertwined with the concept of leadership. For example, "The nature and quality of leadership is also crucial in determining whether effective links will be forged - links between the arts and education, between and among the various arts and other disciplines, between the schools and other institutions, between public and private institutions. It is individual leaders, working in communities and schools, who have the power to start the process of change which can gradually stretch to the district, the region, the state, and ultimately to the nation".(5) (I will return to the topic of leadership for further comment in a following section of this paper.)

In 1982, Laura H. Chapman published an extensive list of recommendations for change in her book, Instant Art, Instant Culture: The Unspoken Policy for American Schools. The theme of collaboration was central to her belief that, "The vitality of the arts is an important measure of the personal and civic aspirations of a society, and of the quality of life which it has attained. Taken together, the arts, sciences and humanities encompass much of what we regard as civilization. Insofar as we regard these fields of endeavor as window-dressing in the education of children, we betray the aspirations that we have for ourselves, each other, and future generations. If the arts are to function as civilizing forces in our society, we must come to regard them as something more than a cosmetic within the culture and within our schools".(6) It seems clear to me Chapman accomplished very commendable work in establishing a significant agenda for the arts community dealing with such crucial topics as curriculum reformation, leadership, and research. In so doing she emphasized collaboration as the primary vehicle through which change could be initiated. The strategy of collaboration was advocated without reservation.

Also in 1982, another book was published that advocated the value of networking and collaboration as tools of change for arts education. Changing Schools Through the Arts was authored by Jane Remer. In describing the characteristics of AGE (Arts in General Education) she stated, "AGE is a collaborative effort that relies on hooking up, or networking. It means that people plan and work together, share ideas, information, and resources, and make connections. It is a holistic or comprehensive way of dealing with

a school and its community by studying the institution's structure and operational patterns and figuring out how the arts and artists can become more prominent, more persuasive, and more useful in the education of the young".(7) She concluded her book with a call for a national task force on the arts in general education to examine needs, develop goals and a plan of action.

Another call for collaboration was the Arts & Education Handbook: A Guide to Productive Collaborations, edited by Jonathon Katz and published by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies in 1988. As stated in the summary, "There is no substitute for a mandated, sequential, K-12 arts curriculum taught by teachers who are specialists in the arts. Resources abound at the state and local level to help enhance, enliven, and support arts learning. A strong working partnership between those who value the arts and those who value education can provide schools with many of the resources they need to create more dynamic and more comprehensive programs of arts instruction for schools at all levels of development".(8) While the editor included a few references to the needs of discrete programs, like discipline-based art education, the overwhelming thrust was to promote collaboration as a means to achieve common goals.

Another major call for collaboration was the federal report on arts education issued by the National Endowment for the Arts in 1988. The report, titled Toward Civilization, was requested by the 99th Congress as part of the reauthorization of the Endowment. Among the many recommendations in the report, the following one illustrates very clearly the use of collaboration as a political tool: "The governance, education,

arts and business-producer sectors should work together to convince parents and political and education leaders at the state, district, and local levels that education is complete and acceptable only when the arts are included as essential components sequentially taught. Making the case for arts education to state and local leadership is a political job requiring greater effort than it does for school subjects that large segments of the public already perceive to be basic".(9)

As further stated in the report, "It should be remembered that the National Endowment for the Arts is not an education agency and that decisions on learning goals, curricula, resources, and testing and evaluations are, and should be, ultimately made at the state and school-district levels. Nonetheless, the Endowment believes that it can and should exercise a leadership role in encouraging, in collaboration with state and local arts agencies and state and local education authorities, a more basic and sequential approach to arts education".(10)

Another report, also issued in 1988, was published by the American Council for the Arts as a sequel to Coming to Our Senses. The report, authored by Charles Fowler, Can We Rescue the Arts for America's Children? restated the belief in collaboration as the basic tool for change. For example, Fowler wrote, "The idea of establishing a major curricular area for the arts comparable to that of the sciences or the humanities is gaining momentum. State education leaders, school administrators, and school board members are beginning to talk more in terms of "the arts" than music or art or dance".(11) While Fowler was sensitive to the idea of discipline

integrity, he nonetheless advocated a comprehensive arts curriculum. In fact, he proposed the institutionalization of arts education at the national level in the following manner: "Perhaps the solution is for all the arts education associations to form a National Arts Education Council for the purpose of formulating policy across the arts and initiating the strategies and establishing the support to make those policies operative".(12) I disagree. I strongly feel such a move on behalf of arts education would encumber the development of discipline-based art education.

Other recent calls for collaboration, all published in 1989, included Bennett Reimer's proposal for a comprehensive arts curriculum model(13); David Pankratz's arts education research agenda(14); Fred Lazarus' analysis of advocacy needs(15); Brent Wilson's framework for policy development(16); and John Braedemas' reminder about the benefits derived from the advocacy movement over the past decade.(17) In particular, Braedemas has pointed to the creation of the National Arts Education Research Centers at New York University and the University of Illinois as primary examples of significant commitment at the federal level to arts education. In a very real way the fruits of collaboration are slowly building an arts education bureaucracy.

My purpose in assembling, and briefly reviewing, these various calls for collaboration is not to question their validity, nor their value to education in general. My purpose is simply to clearly demonstrate how dominate the theme of collaboration has been in the literature and the advocacy movement regarding educational opportunities in dance, music, theater and the visual arts. The need for a political strategy concerning

the change process found a convenient solution in the name of collaboration which in many instances has very likely been the right solution within the context of available resources.

But, I firmly believe there is a serious conceptual problem regarding collaborative efforts on behalf of education in the four major art forms that needs to be addressed. What began as a useful strategy for bringing individuals and organizations together has slowly evolved into a quasi-administrative plan that I feel, in particular, is inappropriate for art education at this time. I believe it is inappropriate because we (advocates) are trying to build massive bridges over small rivers. We are also not applying what is available knowledge about management theories and effective leadership to our multi-dimensional agenda. We have allowed our artistic imaginations to grow beyond the limits of cold facts and sound practices. We are not ready to reshape public education when we barely have the means and the expertise to maintain our current programs. I am not a pessimist. I am just trying to be a realist regarding the future of art education and I can readily see that the advocacy movement via collaboration among the disciplines and the influence sectors is much too big of a chunk of reality to forge when extensive work still needs to be done within the discipline of art education itself.

For the sake of further illustration, I will briefly consider two state-level examples of advocacy on behalf of arts education.

Beyond Chapter Five

In 1988, the State of Pennsylvania published a policy guide regarding arts education. The guide, titled Beyond Chapter Five, outlined eight principles to "establish a new and sharp vision of quality arts education for all Pennsylvania schools".(18) The principles (which are testimonial in nature) ranged from the essentialness of the arts to the evaluation of learning in the arts. While the arts are broadly divided into the three major areas of performing arts, visual arts, and media arts, the guide does not differentiate developmental needs. In fact, the guide treats the four major art forms of dance, music, theater and the visual arts as one domain of learning; which is to say, "A minimum of 15 percent of each students' yearly program should be devoted to the study of the arts".(19) Since there are no further explanations as to how this instructional time should be scheduled the reader is left to assume that one class out of a seven period school day should be an arts class of some kind, or maybe not. The guide is definitely ambiguous about a topic that is basic to education.

Aim for Excellence

In 1989, the State of Iowa published a plan for making arts education basic in the schools. The plan, Aim for Excellence, was jointly developed by the Iowa Department of Education and the Iowa Arts Council.(20) While the plan does encompass the four major art forms of dance, music, theater and the visual arts, it does something that Beyond Chapter Five neglected to do. Aim for Excellence does differentiate among the art forms. It does

provide a plan that is discipline-specific, which is to say that different organizational activities were identified for dance and theater because they apparently have greater needs than music and the visual arts in Iowa. While the evidence was not specifically reported regarding the level of need for each art form, it is apparent from the information provided in the plan that somewhere in the collaborative process decisions were made in favor of dance and theater as arts disciplines in need of greater attention. The plan does not include any resources earmarked for a discipline-based approach to art education.

My point in citing both of these state-level efforts is not to harshly criticize the Pennsylvania principles, nor the Iowa plan, but my point is to show how the theoretical use of collaboration has resulted in questionable policies and plans regarding the future of discipline-based art education.

Within this framework of state-level concepts and activities on behalf of education in the four major art forms, I feel it is worth glancing backward in time to briefly consider the research projects that were funded through the Arts and Humanities Program of the U.S. Office of Education between 1965 and 1970.(24) Of the nearly two hundred research and development projects regarding the arts in education over two-thirds of them were studies or activities concerning art education and music education. Specifically, the projects were distributed according to the major art forms as follows:

Dance Education	3%
Music Education	33%
Theater Education	10%
Visual Arts Education (including Architecture, Media Arts, and Museum Education)	38%
Other	16%

This distribution clearly shows that the advocacy movement at the federal level was generated from a body of knowledge that was discipline-specific. My conclusion is that the advocacy movement has forgotten its roots.

My basic concern is that the advocacy movement has generated a momentum (as Fowler has pointed out) that should not be continued in its present form because the convenient umbrella concept of arts education is not conceptually strong enough to accept and manage differentiated needs and directions among the four major art forms of dance, music, theater and the visual arts in public education.

Conflict

This paper does not provide the appropriate context for fully explaining and interpreting the many possible ramifications of management and leadership theories, and related research findings, as they apply to the present state of education in the four major art forms. But, in terms

of the concept of collaboration, there are two prominent variables in the literature concerning organizational management and leadership which need to be highlighted. The two variables are division of labor (specialization of function) and decision making. Regardless of which theoretical framework one uses to view the world of organizational behavior (classical theory, social theory or open system theory),(22) both of these variables are common concerns in the management of policies, procedures, and resources. As such, they are concerns that need to be appplied to the context under consideration in this paper. It is clear to me that the overuse of the concept of collaboration as the primary advocacy strategy has created conflict for art education in general, and especially those art educators who are attempting to advance the development of discipline-based art education. I believe the conflict is present because the concepts of specialization and decision making have not been fully addressed in the intellectual activity regarding education in the four major art forms.

In the case of specialization, I feel the convenient, umbrella concept of arts education has created a false image of interdependence among the art forms and their disciplinary structure in education. The umbrella concept has also created a false image of meaningful and reliable coordination among the four major curricular areas. Both of these images (assumptions) need to be analyzed, especially in terms of policy development and significant practices. Each art form and its educational pedogogy is unique. As Elliott Eisner has stated, "Every sensory medium

and each form of representation, as well as every material and each array of expressive techniques exact their own intellectual demands".(22) It seems to me these unique qualities need to be cherished, preserved and allowed to flourish in terms of their educational manifestations. In fact, research in cognitive psychology has established a preference for domain-specific knowledge for problem solving versus general problem solving. For example, as reported by Ellen Gagne, "studies comparing expert and novice problem solvers suggest that problem solving can be developed best by helping people acquire domain-specific knowledge".(24)

While the four art forms share several similar formal qualities, such as the concept of contrast, and share similar expressive qualities, such as the concept of somberness, they share no greater number of concepts than concepts shared with other curricular areas such as literature or geography. Based upon my personal experiences with the four art forms they are more different than they are alike. To me, in the context of general education, the visual arts are more like creative writing and technology education; theater is more like literature and speech; music education is more like mathematics and a foreign language; and dance is more akin to physical education and health. But, the four art forms have been grouped together for purposes other than their specific contributions to the education of young people and adults. For me the convenient umbrella concept of arts education for the sake of advocacy is interfering with the evolution of the four art forms in public education, especially art education.

To repeat, the umbrella concept of arts education has created an unnecessary degree of programming ambiguity. For example, in both reports, Toward Civilization and Beyond Chapter Five, there are similar recommendations to commit fifteen percent of instructional time for the arts. In neither report is that fifteen percent further subdivided among the four art forms. From the viewpoint of educational administration such a recommendation is incongruent with informed organizational practices of prescribed competence and functional specificity. Such a recommendation has the potential of generating more problems than solutions.

In the case of the variable of decision making, there are two interrelated concerns which I believe are worth examining. These concerns are the topics of control and influence. It seems to me that the principles, policies and practices that have evolved under the arts education umbrella via the concept of collaboration are questionable in these matters as well.

The topic of control can be restated as follows: Who decides what for whom? The allocation of resources in public education ought to be distributed on the bases of what each component contributes to the overall goals of the school or district. As such each component (program) should be required to justify its merits and document its results. The umbrella concept of arts education may have created a distorted picture of what the public is receiving for its tax dollars. In other words, the umbrella concept of arts education has the potential of creating ambiguity throughout the program budgeting and evaluation system of public education in terms of dance, music, theater and the visual arts.

The sense of influence that I am using in the context of this paper is influence as a socio-political concept. In this context it is a fundamental concept in the evolution of the four major art forms in public education. Since each form has its own establishment of opportunities, organizations and offices, it seems apparent that the most practical and meaningful collaboration would occur within each discipline's own sphere of influence rather than among the spheres of influence. While there are connections and overlap among the four major art forms and their advocates, the extent of influence has been established to be the most effective when there is an alignment of task, power and positive relations among group members.(25) Suffice to say, the likelihood of such alignment is generated within a discipline rather than among disciplines. Not only is alignment more likely to occur, but the benefits may be more significant. It seems to me, coordination between and among grades, levels of education, support systems, and advocates that is discipline-specific is being curtailed at the expense of supporting departmental connections to serve the testimonial policies of the advisory movement on behalf of education in dance, music, theater and the visual arts.

Toward Discipline-Based Art Education

Even though the antecedents have been in place for over thirty years, it has taken the leadership and resources of the Getty Center for Education in the Arts to advance the development of discipline-based art

education (DBAE) within the past half decade.(26) Since the publication in 1985 of Beyond Creating: The Place for Art in America's Schools, the dialogue and debate about the value and liabilities of discipline-based art education have played a dominant role in the art education literature and in the proceedings of art education conferences nationally, regionally, and at the state level. Not only have many experts in the field advocated a discipline-based approach but several influential organizations have gone on public record as supporting the basic premises of DBAE. These organizations include the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the National Art Education Association, the National Education Association, and the National Endowment for the Arts.(27) The volume of intellectual activity on behalf of, and against DBAE, has indeed been extensive. The discipline-based approach has been analyzed and criticized from both problematic (28) and promising (29) perspectives. From my perspective it has been a much needed and welcomed dialogue and debate, which I believe will eventually expand the options for children, adolescents and adults to access art as both an experience and a body of knowledge.(30)

In its simplest form discipline-based art education formally combines the creating of artistic images, objects and environments with critical and philosophical thinking about what is being created as well as what others have created. It is comprised of the following four domains of study: art production, art criticism, history and culture, and aesthetics.(31) Each of these domains provides a source of knowledge,

which together provide a more accurate representation of the nature of artistry in the visual arts and its pursuit by novices and experts.

But, my purpose in briefly specifying several attributes of discipline-based art education is not to rationalize nor criticize this approach to art education. Rather my purpose is to raise the following questions: How and where does discipline-based art education fit into the advocacy movement? I believe the answers to both of these questions provide reliable references for advocating the development of a National Institute for Education in the Visual Arts.

First, it seems to me, in a metaphorical sense, discipline-based art education is a child of the advocacy movement in that a public image of art education is now being fashioned that makes it a more significant educational pursuit within the context of greater parental and professional expectations for more challenging educational programs. As such, advocates of the four major art forms are pleased to associate themselves with the development of higher order thinking skills and multiple forms of intelligence.(32)

In another sense, discipline-based art education has created a need for an agenda for change for art educators that is out-of-step with the collaborative emphasis of the advocacy movement. Teachers of the visual arts, at all educational levels and with different areas of expertise, need to focus on such issues of curriculum coordination, the specifications of facilities and instructional resources, exhibition opportunities and vocational programs. Such dialogue and development is

needed to strengthen the profession of teaching the visual arts. According to D.J. Davis, "Research data does not support, question, or negate most of the major issues confronting teacher education in art. Practice will continue to be guided for the time being by philosophical positions rather than emperical, evidence. A research agenda must be articulated, and a commitment to pursuing it must be a higher priority.(33) To coin a phrase from art critic, Suzi Gablik, we need "models of creative partnership".(34)

National Institute for Education in the Visual Arts

One conclusion I have reached in my pursuit of collaboration regarding "arts" education in that the theme of collaboration must be emphasized within each discipline instead of among the disciplines. I believe this emphasis is especially appropriate for discipline-based art education, which needs the focused attention of art educators in order to reduce the gap between theory and practice. As Stephen Mark Dobbs has stated, "To remedy this problem requires greater effort on the part of theorists to communicate clearly and effectively with practitioners. Perhaps a kind of educational broker role might be created to translate, interpret, and mediate the application of theory to practice. In any case, theory makers must be open to dialogue with practitioners and listen carefully to the fund of experience out of which important lessons can be learned. In fact, the agenda for research and theory making should be strongly shaped by the needs of the classroom for implementation of good ideas".(35)

We, the theorists, practitioners, and advocates of discipline-based art education need an educational broker to facilitate the application of theory and research into practice. We need a vehicle to help sustain collaboration within the discipline of art education over an extended period of time. We need to develop means to increase the quality and quantity of formal instruction in art criticism, history and culture, and aesthetics. We need to formalize instructional practices and resources regarding architecture, the media arts and museum education. We need a National Institute for Education in the Visual Arts to address these matters and other relevant factors in our collaborative pursuit of high quality art education nationwide.

As I see it, the National Institute for Education in the Visual Arts would provide the following services to the field:

1. It would conduct research and curriculum development activities.
2. It would publish and disseminate reports of its findings and do the same for the related work of other organizations and individuals.
3. It would be an information center.
4. It would be a conference center.

The Institute would provide for visual arts education a national agency which would connect the different sectors of influence that have been outlined by Wilson: the federal sector, the regulatory and curricular sector, the professional associations sector, the advocacy sector and the art world of artists, agencies, galleries, dealers, critics, collectors, and museums.(36)

In the practical matter of financing such a National Institute for Education in the Visual Arts, it seems to me several very likely sources of funds include the following: the College Art Association of America, the Getty Center for Education in the Arts, the National Art Education Association Foundation, the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, the National Endowment for the Arts, the U.S. Department of Education, concerned citizens, foundations and trusts.

There are other practical matters to consider, such as governance, facility, location, and staffing, that need to be thoroughly addressed in order that the idea of the Institute could become a reality, but my purpose in this paper is not to present a fully developed vision of the Institute. As I have already stated, my purpose is to reduce the ambiguity inherent in the collaborative efforts of the advocacy movement.

Conclusion

Brent Wilson, as principle researcher for the federal report, Toward Civilization, has characterized arts education in America as out of balance, inconsistent and inaccessible. The imbalance he found exists in favor of creation and performance rather than the study of the arts. The inconsistency he discovered exists at all levels of education, including individual schools. Comprehensive and sequential arts education is inaccessible except to a few students who are usually considered talented or interested.(37)

In concert with these characteristics, I have drawn several conclusions from my pursuit of collaboration. First, we are not ready for a national vision regarding arts education. Instead we need national visions that are discipline-specific. Second, in terms of the visual arts, the foundation of a feasible and significant national vision exists in discipline-based art education. Thirdly, I have concluded that what Elliott Eisner wants for children is similar to what we arts advocates should desire for education in dance, music, theater and the visual arts, "We want children to be able to define their own agenda and to become the architects of their own education".(38)

The question in my mind is, is the advocacy movement mature enough and strong enough to support differentiated change in education among the four major art forms? I believe discipline-based art education provides the advocacy movement with a necessary and difficult test. I hope we can succeed.

NOTES

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5. Coming to our Senses, 251.

6. Laura H. Chapman, Instant Art, Instant Culture: The Unspoken Policy for American Schools (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1982), 160.

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12. Ibid., 136.

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